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International migration and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/208, the present report provides a basis for the consideration of possible options for the appropriate follow-up to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which the Assembly conducted in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006. The report also assesses the activities of all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other relevant international and regional organizations in addressing international migration and development issues.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/270, the report includes an evaluation of existing cooperation mechanisms on migration and development based on an overview of ongoing efforts by Governments to include development considerations in regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms and regional consultative processes focusing on international migration.

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Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	3
III.	Follow-up to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	5
	A. Global Forum on Migration and Development	5
	B. Future options for developing the agenda on international migration and development	7
IV.	Addressing international migration and development within the United Nations system and in other relevant international organizations	8
	A. United Nations Secretariat	9
	B. Regional commissions	10
	C. United Nations programmes and funds	11
	D. United Nations research and training institutes	12
	E. Specialized agencies	12
	F. Other international organizations	13
	G. Global Migration Group	13
V.	Cooperation mechanisms on international migration and development	14
	A. Cooperation on international migration in the context of formal intergovernmental groups	14
	B. Regional consultative processes	16
	C. Overall evaluation	17
VI.	Conclusions	19

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development marked a defining moment in the consideration by Member States of the ways and means to maximize the development benefits of international migration and minimize its negative impacts. Until 2006, no major event at the United Nations had focused exclusively on the interrelations between international migration and development. The High-level Dialogue proved that international migration and development could be debated constructively in the United Nations.

2. At the High-level Dialogue, Member States voiced widespread support for the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a global forum as a venue for Governments to discuss the interrelations between international migration and development in a systematic and comprehensive way. During the Dialogue, the Government of Belgium offered to organize the first meeting of such a forum. The Global Forum on Migration and Development was therefore launched in 2006 as a voluntary, non-binding and informal consultative process, led by and open to all States Members and observers of the United Nations. The first meeting of the Global Forum took place in Brussels in July 2007 and was hosted by the Government of Belgium. The second meeting will take place in Manila in October 2008 and is being organized by the Government of the Philippines.

3. The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolutions 61/208, on international migration and development, and 62/270, on the Global Forum on Migration and Development. In its resolution 61/208, the Assembly decided to consider, at its sixty-third session, possible options for appropriate follow-up to the High-level Dialogue. It also encouraged consideration of development dimensions of international migration, in the context of regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms and regional consultative processes on international migration, and called upon all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other relevant organizations to continue addressing the issue of international migration and development within their respective mandates. In its resolution 62/270, the Assembly called for an evaluation of existing cooperation mechanisms on international migration and development. The present report reviews the substantive conclusions of the High-level Dialogue and developments following the Dialogue, especially with respect to the State-led Global Forum, in order to set the stage for the consideration of options for appropriate follow-up to the Dialogue. The report also reviews activities of the United Nations system on international migration and development and provides an overview of efforts to include development dimensions in cooperation mechanisms on international migration together with their evaluation.

II. High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

4. The 132 Member States that participated in the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, conducted by the General Assembly on 14 and 15 September 2006, reaffirmed a number of key messages. First, they underscored that international migration was a growing phenomenon and that it could make a positive contribution to development in countries of origin and

countries of destination provided it was supported by the right policies. Secondly, they emphasized that respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all migrants was essential to reap the benefits of international migration. Thirdly, they recognized the importance of strengthening international cooperation on international migration bilaterally, regionally and globally.

5. Although the High-level Dialogue stressed that international migration could contribute to development, it recognized that international migration was not a substitute for development. All too often, migrants were compelled to seek employment abroad because of poverty, conflict or violations of human rights. Peace and security, good governance, the rule of law and the provision of decent work in countries of origin ensured that people migrated out of choice instead of necessity. International migration needed to be an integral part of the development agenda and should be part of national development strategies.

6. Remittances improved the lives of millions of families and had a positive effect on the economy at large. The transfer costs of remittances had to be reduced and supporting policies were needed to maximize the development potential of remittances. Remittances, being private funds, could not replace official development assistance.

7. Migrant communities were making important contributions to the development of their home countries. Governments were strengthening ties with their citizens abroad and promoting the involvement of their migrants in the transfer of technology, know-how and capital. Promoting the return, whether permanent or temporary, of skilled emigrants could help fill skill gaps at home. Support for entrepreneurship and business creation in countries of origin could promote return.

8. The emigration of highly skilled workers from developing countries posed serious challenges, in particular in small low-income countries where crucial sectors, such as health and education, were severely affected by the emigration of high proportions of skilled persons. Ethical recruitment practices in countries of destination and partnerships to train needed personnel in countries of origin were the suggested policy responses.

9. Special measures were needed to protect migrant women, men and children from violence, discrimination, trafficking, exploitation and abuse and to provide protection to those in need of asylum. It was important to ratify and implement the core human rights instruments. The protocols against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants were considered key instruments in the fight against those crimes. The Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration of the International Labour Organization provided useful guidelines to ensure the respect of the rights of migrant workers.

10. In order to strengthen international cooperation on international migration at the global level, nearly all participants in the Dialogue indicated that intergovernmental dialogue should continue. There was widespread support for establishing a global forum on international migration and development, as proposed by the Secretary-General. The Government of Belgium offered to organize the first meeting of such a forum.

III. Follow-up to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

A. Global Forum on Migration and Development

11. Following the High-level Dialogue, the Government of Belgium launched a process to establish the Global Forum on Migration and Development as a voluntary, non-binding and informal consultative process, led by and open to all States Members of the United Nations and observers. By providing a venue for Governments to address issues related to international migration and development in a systematic and comprehensive way, the Global Forum brings together Government expertise from all regions, promotes dialogue, cooperation and partnerships, and fosters practical and action-oriented outcomes at the national, regional and global levels.

12. The first meeting of the Global Forum took place in Brussels on 10 and 11 July 2007. Representatives of 156 Member States participated in the meeting, which focused on human capital development and labour mobility; remittances and other resources from migrants abroad; institutional and policy coherence, and partnerships. The meeting of Member States was preceded by a one-day meeting of representatives of civil society, organized by the King Baudouin Foundation, whose report was submitted to the Forum.

13. The first meeting of the Global Forum built on the outcome of the High-level Dialogue by adding depth to the discussion of the issues that the Dialogue had addressed and searching for practical ways of responding to the problems identified. Thus, the Forum focused on identifying good practices to leverage the development impact of migrants' resources and to encourage migrants abroad to contribute to the development of communities of origin, in particular through trade, investment and circular migration. It also considered ways of promoting competition among money transfer companies and banks in order to reduce remittance transfer costs, especially by taking advantage of technological developments. With respect to the problems caused by the emigration of high proportions of skilled personnel from small, low-income developing countries, the Forum focused on efforts to develop ethical recruitment practices in countries of destination and on other means, such as circular migration, of palliating the lack of skilled personnel in key sectors.

14. A key objective of the Global Forum process is to promote policy and institutional coherence with respect to international migration and development. Building on one of the achievements of the High-level Dialogue, namely, the development of national positions on international migration and development, the Forum requested Governments to designate national focal points in charge of coordinating positions and action at the national level. A number of Governments reported that their national focal points had been effective promoters of national debate and had contributed to improve understanding of the issues raised by the linkages between international migration and development.

15. The organization of the second meeting of the Global Forum is well under way. Under the general theme of "protecting and empowering migrants for development", the meeting will focus on a review of good practices in protecting migrants' rights during all stages of the migration process; ways of maximizing the contribution of migrants to development through remittances, investment, transfer

of knowledge, networking and partnerships; the beneficial impact of legal migration and ways of reducing irregular movements; the need to improve data and coordinate research to support policy formulation; and ways to promote policy and institutional coherence at the national, regional and global levels. The Government of the Philippines, which is organizing the meeting, will host it in Manila on 29 and 30 October 2008. The meeting will be preceded by a two-day meeting of representatives of civil society organized by the Ayala Foundation.

16. The operational modalities of the Global Forum have been evolving rapidly. At its first meeting, a paper outlining those modalities was discussed and approved. The meetings of the Forum are organized by the Chair-in-Office, assisted by other members of the Troika, which consists of the previous, current and next chairpersons of the Forum. The organizer of the Forum alternates between developed and developing countries. Greece has offered to organize the third meeting of the Forum in 2009 and Argentina has done so for the 2010 meeting. Therefore, the Troika is constituted at present by representatives of Belgium, Greece and the Philippines.

17. A Steering Group is composed of Governments firmly committed to offer sustained support to the Global Forum process and the Chair-in-Office. Members of the Troika are ex officio members of the Steering Group. The Steering Group is regionally balanced and its composition takes into account various migration perspectives. Under the chairmanship of the Philippines, the Steering Group has met several times in Geneva and its members have provided guidance on and input for the thematic preparation of the second meeting of the Forum. Between 20 and 30 Member States have participated in Steering Group meetings.

18. The Chair-in-Office relies on the Friends of the Forum — an open-ended group constituted by all States Members and observers of the United Nations where international organizations are invited as observers — to keep the international community informed about how the Global Forum process is advancing and to obtain advice on the agenda, structure and format of the annual meeting of the Forum. The Friends of the Forum have been meeting at least twice a year, mainly in Geneva.

19. To carry out the tasks related to the Global Forum, the Chair-in-Office is assisted by a small and temporary support structure comprising staff provided by the host Government and experts or advisers seconded by other Governments. Discussions are ongoing on the possibility of setting up a less transient support structure. Forum activities have been financed by Government contributions, including those of the host country.

20. The Global Forum maintains a link with the Secretary-General through its Special Representative on International Migration and Development, who participates in meetings of the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. The Secretary-General delivered the opening address at the first meeting of the Forum in Brussels. The report of the first meeting was transmitted to the President of the General Assembly for distribution to Member States. This practice will be maintained in future meetings of the Forum.

B. Future options for developing the agenda on international migration and development

21. In order to benefit from the views of Member States on the possible options for appropriate follow-up to the High-level Dialogue, a set of open-ended questions was sent to the permanent representatives of States Members of the United Nations and to the national focal points designated in the context of the Global Forum process. By 15 July 2008, 64 Member States had responded to the questions posed (see figure below).[1] Most respondents saw a need for follow-up to the High-level Dialogue in the United Nations.

Figure

Map showing in grey the Member States whose responses were received by 30 June 2008

Note: The boundaries shown on the present map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

22. Virtually all Member States that responded considered the Global Forum to be a useful outcome of the High-level Dialogue. Only three either expressed no opinion on this point or thought the Forum was not a formal outcome of the Dialogue. One in every six respondents was of the view that the Forum should be the sole follow-up to the High-level Dialogue. Many respondents considered that the Forum was contributing to foster dialogue and exchange of experience among practitioners, and that it could provide the action-oriented platform needed to guide cooperation and build partnerships among Member States and with other actors. Several respondents noted that the State-led and informal nature of the Forum provided the flexibility

[1] On 18 March 2008, a letter from the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang, accompanied by a questionnaire for Member States on the follow-up to the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, was sent by telefax to 193 Permanent Representatives of States Members of the United Nations, the Holy See and Palestine, with copy to the national focal points designated in the context of the Global Forum. Reminders requesting a response were sent by e-mail and follow-up by telephone was made during the week preceding and following the deadline for submission (30 April 2008). By 15 July 2008, 64 Member States had replied to the questionnaire.

needed to explore complex and potentially divisive issues. Some respondents were of the view that the link between the Forum and the United Nations needed to be strengthened. Others considered that the Forum process needed more time to develop on its own before its relationship to the United Nations was modified.

23. Many of the Member States that responded viewed the follow-up as a process to take stock of what was being achieved and to address outstanding issues. A number of suggestions for follow-up were put forward from this perspective, including the continued inclusion of an item on international migration and development on the agenda of the Assembly; fostering cooperation and dialogue at the regional and global levels; and organizing regional or thematic meetings. Some respondents suggested that any further deliberations by the Assembly on international migration and development should give special consideration to the ideas and initiatives being generated by the Global Forum. Others noted that the Assembly should bring together the various regional perspectives and build upon regional and interregional initiatives. Several respondents considered that the Assembly should focus periodically and at a high level on international migration and development to take stock of advances made by Governments, the United Nations system and other international or intergovernmental organizations at the regional, interregional and global levels. Follow-up by the Assembly was thought desirable because it was the only body of the United Nations with the necessary universality and legitimacy to provide the framework for broader agenda-setting and political commitment.

24. Several Member States underscored that follow-up to the High-level Dialogue should encompass actions to implement the guidance emanating from the Dialogue. They considered that a key element of follow-up was the implementation of new initiatives through existing multilateral structures, including the international financial institutions. In their view, any follow-up by the General Assembly should take account of the activities of the multilateral system, including the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system.

IV. Addressing international migration and development within the United Nations system and in other relevant international organizations

25. The present section focuses on the activities on international migration and development that relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other relevant organizations have conducted since the 2006 High-level Dialogue. Although the mandates of the different entities considered did not change immediately in response to the Dialogue, many of those mandates already incorporate a focus on international migration and its relation to development derived from the objectives and guidelines for action contained in the various outcome documents of the major United Nations conferences and summits which, taken as a whole, provide a solid agenda for action on international migration.[2]

[2] See "Compendium of Recommendations on International Migration and Development" (ESA/P/WP.197).

A. United Nations Secretariat

26. Within the United Nations Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is the focal point for international migration and development, mainly through the activities of its Population Division. The Division provides substantive secretariat support for the meetings of the Commission on Population and Development. It also carries out substantive work on international migration and development in support of the General Assembly. The Division is the source of authoritative estimates of international migration levels and trends. Since the High-level Dialogue, it has been developing a comprehensive database on international migrant stocks, with the collaboration of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the World Bank. This work has benefited from the financial support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The database is being used to derive estimates of the number of migrants per country by age and sex. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 58/208, the Division convenes annual coordination meetings on international migration where all relevant entities in the United Nations system meet to exchange information about ongoing activities and report on future work in the area of international migration and development. The Statistics Division is in charge of compiling international migration statistics and providing recommendations to promote their harmonization. Since the Dialogue, the Statistics Division has been active in developing guidelines on the implementation of the most recent set of recommendations.

27. The rights of migrants and their interrelations with development are the purview of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Office collaborates with partner agencies to protect the rights of all migrants at all stages of the migration process and promotes understanding of the relevance of human rights in realizing the benefits of international migration and facing the challenges it poses. During International Migrants Day on 18 December, the High Commissioner underscored that all migrants, regardless of their status, are entitled to enjoy human rights and emphasized that both migrant women and men contribute to economic and social development. OHCHR supports the work of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Both Special Rapporteurs have been focusing on the root causes of migration, migration and discrimination, the administrative detention of migrants and the protection of migrant women, unaccompanied minors and domestic workers. The Office services the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the body supervising compliance by States parties with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

28. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime assists Member States in implementing the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Office provides pre-ratification assistance, assistance in protecting and supporting victims, and guidance on policy development. It also promotes international cooperation and campaigns to raise awareness. In 2006, UNODC launched an initiative to strengthen the response of national criminal justice systems to migrant smuggling. In 2007, it launched the

United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, which aims at implementing effective policies against human trafficking, raising awareness about the dangers it poses, mobilizing resources, increasing the knowledge base and implementing projects through partnerships.

B. Regional commissions

29. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) views regional economic integration as key to harnessing the benefits of international migration for development. It works towards removing obstacles to trade liberalization, market access and the movement of people. Development in Africa requires peace and stability based on the full respect of human rights, including the rights of international migrants and their families, and the promotion of multiculturalism, tolerance and social integration. In 2006, ECA prepared a report entitled "International Migration and Development: Implications for Africa" (ECA/SDD/06/01) and signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In 2008-2010, the Commission's work will focus on the role of remittances in development, capacity-building to improve the management of migration and migration and regional integration.

30. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), carries out activities on international migration, human rights and development as part of its regular programme of work and with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). These activities include research, training, data dissemination, publications, technical assistance, organization and support of regional conferences, seminars and intergovernmental forums, including the Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development. In 2008-2009, CELADE will implement, in collaboration with the other regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, a project to strengthen national capacities to maximize the development benefits of international migration.

31. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will convene a high-level meeting on international migration and development in 2008. ESCAP has undertaken a study on the social implications of international migration and is participating in the Thematic Working Group on International Migration, including Human Trafficking, to carry out an analysis of international migration in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. ESCAP and IOM signed a memorandum of understanding in 2007 and are co-chairs of the Thematic Working Group.

32. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) seeks to integrate international migration and development in national development strategies and ensure that the needs of migrant workers are addressed in social policy formulation. In 2007, ESCWA published a report entitled "International Migration and Development in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities" (E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/2), reflecting the proceedings of an expert meeting organized in collaboration with the Population Division. In 2007, the Commission issued a fact sheet and a wallchart on international migration and development in the Arab region.

C. United Nations programmes and funds

33. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) aims to maximize the contribution of migration to development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by offering policy options on migration, trade and development. It provides strategic advice on trade and investment opportunities created by migrant communities and on policies to enhance the development impact of migrants' remittances to policymakers, trade negotiators and regulators. UNCTAD has been contributing to improving the knowledge base on circular migration and the emigration of highly skilled workers. Moreover, it facilitates and encourages temporary movements through mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, trade in labour-intensive services, skills development and recognition of qualifications.

34. The United Nations Development Programme focuses mainly on developing policies to manage migration, including temporary or circular migration, to promote the productive use of remittances and to engage migrant communities as development actors. UNDP, in collaboration with IOM, UNICEF and the World Bank, is preparing a handbook on integrating migration into national development strategies. On behalf of the European Commission and with other United Nations agencies and IOM, UNDP is managing a programme on knowledge-sharing related to migration and development. In addition, it manages the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) Achievement Fund, financed by the Government of Spain, which includes funding for youth, employment and migration. UNDP and the Financing for Development Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs are preparing a report on realizing the potential of migrant communities abroad to reduce poverty and enhance entrepreneurship.

35. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has the task of ensuring the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers and finding solutions for the plight of refugees. Increasingly, persons in need of protection are found among the flows of persons migrating for other reasons. The High-level Dialogue validated the view that refugees, though special because of their need for international protection, must be included in the global debate on international migration and development. In order to address the challenges posed by "mixed migration" flows, UNHCR has developed a 10-point plan of action for refugee protection and mixed migration. The plan offers a framework to assist States in ensuring that persons in need of international protection who travel over the same routes as other migrants or in conjunction with them can be identified and treated appropriately. To examine the challenges and dilemmas linked to refugee protection amid today's migration flows, the High Commissioner organized and chaired a Dialogue on Protection Challenges, held in Geneva in December 2007.

36. The United Nations Children's Fund conducts research and analyses to identify practical solutions to the challenges that migration poses. A major concern is the plight of unaccompanied migrant children or those separated from their families. UNICEF focuses on assessing the impact of remittances on children left behind, safeguarding the rights of children and women affected by migration, preventing child trafficking and documenting the gender aspects of migration. Moreover, the Fund is testing methodologies to assess the social impact of migration and remittances on children left behind, using household surveys.

37. The United Nations Population Fund facilitates policy dialogue and cooperation among Governments, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and civil society to increase understanding of migration issues and to address the challenges of migration, including those faced by migrant women. It supports the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive migration policies and programmes, and the integration of migration issues into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies. In addition, the Fund is working to prevent trafficking in girls and women and to assist victims of trafficking. Moreover, it supports programmes to prevent HIV infection, promote maternal and child health, and provide access to family planning, reproductive health information, counselling and services to refugees and migrant communities. Furthermore, UNFPA is supporting the collection and dissemination of age and sex-disaggregated migration data, in particular those derived from censuses.

D. United Nations research and training institutes

38. Since 2006, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has been organizing the "Migration and Development" seminar series for the diplomatic community in New York, with the support and collaboration of IOM, UNFPA and the MacArthur Foundation. The series has focused on key migration issues to provide Government representatives with the evidence and information they need to conduct intergovernmental discussions. In addition, starting in 2007, UNITAR and its partners have been organizing an annual course on international migration law designed to meet the needs of diplomats in New York.

39. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) seeks to integrate the gender dimension in policies and programmes. It has worked on analysing changes in the migration of women; studying the impact of migration on gender roles, power relations and decision-making processes within households and communities; considering the linkages between migration, remittances and development, especially with respect to women, and documenting caregiver arrangements from a transnational perspective. INSTRAW has completed 18 case studies in various countries focusing on ways to maximize the impact of female migration and remittances on community and national development in countries of origin and destination.

E. Specialized agencies

40. The work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on international migration and development is guided by the premise that the protection of migrants' rights and the development benefits of migration are inseparable. ILO recently issued a policy brief on migration and development and one on migrant rights and development. Through advisory services, advocacy, research, the dissemination of information and technical assistance for Member States and social partners, the organization aims at mainstreaming migration in decent work programmes, optimizing the use of migrant remittances and reintegrating returnees through small enterprise development. It works closely with the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, international organizations that are members of the Global Migration Group and the Governments

participating in the Global Forum on Migration and Development to promote development-friendly and gender-sensitive migration policies and practices.

41. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) addresses a range of migration issues, including the emigration of highly skilled workers, the international mobility of students, the international recognition of qualifications and diplomas, the use of knowledge networks by expatriate communities, cultural diversity and human trafficking. In addition, UNESCO, in collaboration with IOM, has established a network of migration museums to showcase the contributions of migrants to host societies. Moreover, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics compiles data that provide a comprehensive picture of the internationalization of tertiary education. Furthermore, UNESCO has established a number of regional migration research networks to exchange information among researchers and policymakers and promote capacity-building. A research network for Africa will be launched in 2008.

42. The World Bank works on improving knowledge on international migration and development by conducting country-specific and policy-relevant analysis on international migration and development. Its research activities focus primarily on the volume and impact of remittances, the effects of migration on household welfare and the macroeconomic effects of international migration on development. Such research has shown that, to realize the benefits of international migration for development, it is necessary to develop strong institutions, promote competition among money transfer companies and banks in order to reduce the costs of remittance transfers and expand opportunities for the temporary migration of unskilled workers, inter alia, through bilateral agreements. The World Bank supports the incorporation of standardized migration modules in existing survey programmes. It launched a multi-country survey project on international migration, remittances and development in Africa in 2007.

F. Other international organizations

43. The International Organization for Migration focuses on making international migration work for development by integrating migration policies in national development planning processes, including poverty reduction strategies; building the capacities of both Governments and individuals to maximize the development potential of labour migration; and promoting technical cooperation programmes and projects on migration and development. IOM seeks to engage expatriate communities as partners for development, including through the transfer of knowledge and skills. It convenes the International Dialogue on Migration, which brings together Member States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector for informal and non-binding consultations on migration with a view to sharing experiences and identifying effective practices.

G. Global Migration Group

44. The Global Migration Group is an inter-agency body, meeting at the level of heads of agencies, which aims to promote the wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, and the provision of more coherent and stronger leadership to improve the overall

effectiveness of the United Nations and the international community's policy and operational response to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration. As of mid-2008, the membership of the Group included the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNITAR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank as well as the regional commissions of the United Nations. Responding to the invitation of Governments organizing round tables at the meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Brussels and Manila, members of the Group have been providing substantive inputs to those events. Moreover, they are preparing a joint report on international migration and human rights for the second meeting of the Global Forum.

V. Cooperation mechanisms on international migration and development

45. There are two types of mechanisms fostering intergovernmental cooperation on international migration. The first type includes formal regional organizations pursuing wider political or economic objectives, such as economic integration or trade liberalization, which have considered intraregional migration as a means of furthering integration. The second are informal consultative processes, most of which have a regional character, that began to appear mostly after 1995 and whose main objective, at least initially, has been to promote intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation on international migration. There are currently 13 regional consultative processes which, taken together, cover most countries in the world.

46. The present section explores the extent to which the two types of mechanisms have been focusing on the interrelations between international migration and development. When available, information on the achievements made so far is included. A thorough evaluation of the performance of the various mechanisms is, however, far from straightforward, given the diversity of their objectives and modes of operation. However, the discussion below provides an assessment of the extent to which the mechanisms have been focusing on ways to realize the benefits of migration on development.

A. Cooperation on international migration in the context of formal intergovernmental groups

47. In the European Union, facilitating intracommunity migration of European Union citizens has always been an integral part of economic integration. Currently, cooperation on international migration in the European Union revolves mainly around the movement of third-country nationals and is focusing increasingly on the development and employment dimensions of such migration. Thus, the European Union has been developing a number of interregional cooperation mechanisms to promote dialogue and cooperation on international migration with developing countries. In July 2006 the Ministerial Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development, held in Morocco, adopted the Rabat Declaration and an Action Plan. In November 2006 a joint meeting of Member States from Africa and the European Union adopted a Declaration on Migration and Development in Tripoli. More recently, the European Union has held meetings with regional economic

communities in Africa, especially with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to discuss migration issues. In May 2008 the fourth summit meeting between the European Union and the Latin America and Caribbean region, held in Lima, addressed the development dimensions of international migration.

48. In May 2007, the European Commission launched a multi-year programme to assist developing countries in improving the overall management of migration flows. The programme promotes cooperation with third countries in the development aspects of migration and asylum, allocating €15 million, managed jointly with UNDP, to support small-scale migration and development projects. The European Union has been entering into mobility partnerships with some countries in order to facilitate the admission of their citizens to the European Union labour market while cooperating in building their capacity to prevent irregular migration and promote return. The European Commission is exploring whether circular migration programmes can be effective in satisfying labour demand in member States while also fostering development in communities of origin.

49. In 2006, the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, which have special trade relations with the European Union, adopted a Declaration on Asylum, Migration and Mobility and a Plan of Action. Also in 2006 a Joint African, Caribbean and Pacific States-European Union Council of Ministers established the African, Caribbean and Pacific States Migration Facility, which received €25 million from the ninth European Development Fund. The Facility should become operational in 2008. It will support an African, Caribbean and Pacific States Migration Observatory to bring together researchers on migration and development and promote data exchange and analysis. It will also foster the creation of regional forums on migration to strengthen regional and national institutional capacities. In May 2008 African, Caribbean and Pacific States ministers in charge of migration adopted a resolution on migration and development calling attention to the nexus between international migration and the environment, including climate change.

50. In Africa, the African Union adopted in 2006 a Migration Policy Framework calling upon member States and regional economic communities in Africa to strengthen the linkages between countries of origin and migrant communities abroad; to integrate migration and development policies in poverty reduction strategies and national development plans; to mitigate the effects of the emigration of highly skilled professionals and to maximize the mobilization and use of migrant remittances. These recommendations were also reflected in the 2006 African Common Position on Migration and Development.

51. In January 2008, a summit of States members of ECOWAS agreed to a common approach on migration to facilitate the implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement and the right of residence and establishment for ECOWAS citizens. The approach also included agreement on promoting legal migration channels, strengthening ties between countries of origin and migrant communities abroad, and supporting the return of migrants. To implement the common approach, the Government of Spain and the ECOWAS Commission set up a €10 million ECOWAS-Spain Fund on Migration and Development in July 2008.

52. In the Arab region, the League of Arab States has shown increasing interest in the development dimensions of international migration. In July 2006, the League adopted a declaration entitled "Activating the Role of Migration in National

Development and Arab Regional Integration", which recognized the contributions of international migration to development in the Arab region.

53. In Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations adopted in January 2007 a Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and created a committee to oversee its implementation. The Declaration stipulated the responsibilities of countries of origin and those of destination in protecting the fundamental human rights of migrants, creating sustainable livelihoods for their citizens and improving recruitment practices.

54. In Latin America, recent Ibero-American summits have recognized the development potential of international migration as well as the critical role of dialogue and cooperation in promoting the protection of the human rights of migrants. In May 2008 the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) convened the Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development in Cuenca, Ecuador. The Forum drafted a Plan of Action to implement the commitments made at preceding summits and to ensure respect for the human right of migrants.

55. The Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) is committed to achieving economic integration and trade liberalization through the free circulation of the factors of production. MERCOSUR recognizes the contribution that migrants have made to development in the region. It has promoted the regularization of the status of migrants in an irregular situation and underscores the need to protect the human rights of all migrants wherever they find themselves.

56. The Organization of American States, at a special session on migration and development held in May 2007, pledged to develop a comprehensive regional plan aimed at promoting the beneficial effects of international migration, protecting the rights of migrants and facilitating regular migration through cooperative arrangements, involving both Government authorities and civil society organizations.

B. Regional consultative processes[3]

57. Regional consultative processes are informal and State-led. They bring together Government representatives, representatives of selected international organizations and, in some instances, representatives of civil society to facilitate dialogue, promote cooperation and foster the exchange of information on migration issues. In part as a response to the High-level Dialogue, more regional processes are focusing on migration and development.

58. Among those that do, the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa and the Migration Dialogue for Western Africa focus on migration and health, capacity-building and realizing the benefits of migration for development. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa launched a regional consultative process in May 2008 to follow up on recent policy initiatives of the African Union and to assist participating States in incorporating the migration dimension into their national development plans.

[3] The present section draws upon the working paper entitled "Regional consultative processes at the interface of migration and development", prepared for round-table session 3.3 of the second meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (mimeo).

59. In Europe and Northern Africa, the regional Ministerial Conference on Migration in the Western Mediterranean ("5+5 Dialogue") has been focusing on co-development and the contribution of transnational communities to countries of origin as well as on the rights of migrants. The Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration considers the role of official development assistance in addressing the root causes of international migration on a regular basis.

60. In Asia, the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour ("Colombo Process") aims to optimize the benefits of temporary labour migration for countries of origin by protecting migrant workers and promoting legal migration through capacity-building and intergovernmental cooperation. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which has been launched recently to bring together participants in the Colombo Process with the Gulf Cooperation Council, is focusing on ways to maximize the developmental impact of temporary labour migration on both countries of origin and those of destination.

61. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, the South American Conference on Migration ("Lima Process") and the Regional Conference on Migration ("Puebla Process") have been focusing on ways to improve the contribution of migrants to countries of origin, the protection of the human rights of migrants and ways to facilitate remittance transfers.

62. A second group of regional processes includes those that have considered migration and development issues only on an ad hoc basis. The Cross-Border Cooperation Process ("Söderköping Process"), which is primarily concerned with improving border management in Central and Eastern Europe, discussed remittances and their development impacts at a workshop in 2007. The Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees, which normally addresses asylum and migration policies from the perspective of receiving countries, recently organized a workshop on policy coherence that included consideration of remittances, the role of expatriate communities and the benefits of circular migration. The Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants also considers issues relating to migration and development on an ad hoc basis.

63. Lastly, some regional processes promote good governance on migration without considering its development dimensions. Thus, the Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime ("Bali Process") focuses primarily on ways to prevent or combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The "Budapest Process", which focuses mainly on migration control, including border management, return and readmission of migrants in irregular situations, recently organized a meeting on labour migration, integration and reintegration, although the meeting did not explore the benefits of such migration issues for development.

C. Overall evaluation

64. Since the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, intergovernmental cooperation in the area of migration has increased markedly. Various regional intergovernmental groups and consultative processes have been focusing increasingly on the development dimensions of international migration, although they have done so in different ways and with different

perspectives. The need to understand better the issues raised by international migration in relation to development, to exchange experience and know-how, and to build common positions has propelled more countries to join regional groups and some regional groups to cooperate with each other. It seems that the High-level Dialogue served as a catalyst to generate considerable activity in this area.

65. Many Governments engaging in regional processes are, however, still facing the challenge of ensuring implementation of the plans adopted and the decisions taken. Effective follow-up of declarations, plans of action and other non-binding commitments depends crucially on the political will of each and every Government, on the availability of resources and on the existence of appropriate institutional and human capacity to implement or adapt, as necessary. Regional groups that have strong institutions and adequate resources are better able to achieve tangible progress. The European Union, for instance, is able to carry through the programmes its members approve. The Puebla Process has also been able to deliver on many of the activities to which Governments committed in its first Plan of Action on Migration and Development.

66. Regional consultative processes established more recently have been less successful in following up on commitments made. The consultative nature of those processes does not provide the strong institutional support that some Governments require to follow through on commitments made. Although participation in the regional processes is, in itself, a way of building capacity among participating States, some of them require additional support to strengthen their human resources in the area of migration.

67. The consideration of migration issues by regional economic communities is not new. Yet few of them have achieved true integration with respect to migration. Though some advances may have been made recently in facilitating the travel of citizens between members of some regional economic communities, true freedom of movement does not exist in most of them. On the positive side, most regional economic communities have been reaffirming that migration can have benefits for development, a perspective that should prove useful in guiding a more open and constructive debate of the issues.

68. In sum, there is a wide variety of experiences on how and to what extent regional groups or processes have advanced in addressing the development dimensions of migration. Cooperation in this area is definitely on the rise, but it is too early to tell whether it will yield more systematic and successful policy interventions to promote the beneficial aspects of migration on development. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that increasing flows of development assistance are being devoted to address migration issues. If this trend continues, change is sure to follow. To ensure that it is beneficial, it may be useful to encourage more comprehensive reporting from the various cooperation mechanisms and an assessment of the results achieved.

VI. Conclusions

69. **Nearly all participants in the High-level Dialogue expressed the need to continue intergovernmental dialogue at the global level. The Dialogue proved that international migration and development can be debated constructively in the United Nations. There was widespread support for an informal, State-led, consultative global forum, as proposed by the Secretary-General.**

70. **The first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, organized by the Government of Belgium, was successful on many counts. Representatives of over 150 Member States participated. Their debates added depth to the discussion of the issues that the Dialogue had addressed and sought practical ways of responding to the problems identified. It established a network of national focal points in charge of coordinating positions and action at the national level, and developed its own operating modalities. The Government of the Philippines is organizing the second meeting of the Global Forum and the Governments of Greece and Argentina have offered to host the third and fourth meetings, respectively.**

71. **Suggestions made by Member States regarding appropriate follow-up to the High-level Dialogue within the United Nations include: (a) to continue including an item on international migration and development on the agenda of the General Assembly; (b) to give special consideration to the ideas and initiatives being generated by the Global Forum on Migration and Development in the Assembly's deliberations on international migration and development; (c) to conduct periodically a high-level dialogue in the Assembly in order to take stock of the advances made by Governments, the United Nations system and other international or intergovernmental organizations at the regional, interregional and global levels.**

72. **Member States underscored that follow-up to the Dialogue should encompass actions to implement the guidance emanating from the Dialogue. They considered that a key element of follow-up was the implementation of new initiatives through existing multilateral structures, including the international financial institutions. In their view, any follow-up by the General Assembly should take account of the activities of the multilateral system, including those of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system.**

73. **Relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental organizations continue to address the issue of international migration and development by carrying out a wide range of activities within their respective mandates. These activities include building capacity, assisting in the formulation and implementation of migration policies, and promoting practices that maximize the positive impact of migration on development and minimize its negative outcomes.**

74. **Intergovernmental cooperation in the area of migration has increased markedly. Regional intergovernmental groups and consultative processes have increasingly been focusing attention on the development dimensions of migration, albeit in different ways and from different perspectives. Levels of development assistance directed to migration and development projects appear to be rising.**

75. **The implementation of commitments and plans of action drafted by regional groups or processes remains a challenge. More comprehensive reporting from the various cooperation mechanisms and an assessment of the results achieved would be useful. Better monitoring of financial resources, in particular those provided through development assistance, for the implementation of international migration and development activities is desirable.**